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# Interracial News Service

A DIGEST OF TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMAN RELATIONS

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## CONTRADICTORY TO CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE

### General Assembly Speaks

Racial segregation is contradictory to the teaching of Jesus. Christians in increasing numbers are convinced of this. The majority of the communions in the National Council of Churches have spoken out against racially exclusive policies and practices within the churches. There is increasing movement in the direction of developing racial inclusiveness at all levels of the churches' life and work.

Furthermore, most of the member communions have made it clear that they must oppose any law or community practice which segregates or discriminates on the basis of race, color or national origin. Such laws and practices are contrary to the Christian principle, that all men are beings of worth in the sight of God. They deny the God-given rights, the enjoyment of which is guaranteed to all persons by our free and democratic society. In this connection many national, regional and local church bodies have supported the United States Supreme Court's decision regarding the elimination of segregation from public schools. They have spoken with equal clarity against segregation in public transportation, housing and other aspects of community life. Many of the member communions of the National Council of Churches have carried forward within the churches active programs of social education and action aimed at the elimination of segregation in all spheres of life. Despite these activities, the churches must do far more to live up to the responsibilities of Christian brotherhood.

It is encouraging that a large number of church groups and others have been speaking out against the fact that economic, political and community pressures are being applied to thwart desegregation of the public schools. These pressures deny economic, social and political rights, above all the right to vote, threatening the very foundation of our Nation. They deny such personal rights as freedom of religion and conscience, freedom of speech, freedom of peaceable association and assembly and freedom from arbitrary arrest, police brutality, mob violence and intimidation.

The General Assembly of the National Council of Churches is grateful for the effective Christian witness which many churches and individual Christians are bearing in communities disturbed by tension and confusion in connection with problems of desegregation. We join them in urging responsible local community action and obedience to the mandates of the United States Supreme Court. We hope that the necessity of further federal enforcement of rights can be avoided by the responsible action of local authorities. We are thankful that churches and individual Christians impelled by the mandates of the Gospel of Christ, are standing for justice along with reconciliation, for law along with self-discipline. We assure the churches and our fellow Christians in these agonizing situations of our sympathy and prayers, including continued practical support when they suffer hardship as a result of loyalty to Christian principles.

The General Assembly of the National Council of Churches reaffirms at this time its renunciation of the pattern of racial segregation, both in the churches and in society, as a violation of The Gospel of love and human brotherhood. Segregation is also bad economics, wasteful of human resources,

detrimental to the development of a healthy political life, a grave obstacle to the development of our relationship and mission with churches in other parts of the world and to the establishment of world peace. This General Assembly commits itself, and urges the member churches and all of their constituencies to commit themselves, to strengthen further the efforts and to increase the work of the churches, national, regional and local, to achieve as soon as possible a nonsegregated society.

### Atlanta Ministers "Manifesto"

One of the strongest and most liberal statements on the race issue to be made in the South has come from 80 clergymen of the Metropolitan Atlanta area. Their words are expected to have a deep influence on southern thinking at a crucial time.

Speaking as individuals rather than official representatives of their churches, the clergymen stressed these six points:

1. Freedom of speech must at all cost be preserved.
2. As Americans and as Christians we have an obligation to obey the law.
3. The public school system must not be destroyed.
4. Hatred and scorn for those of another race, or for those who hold a different position from our own, can never be justified.
5. Communication between responsible leaders of the races must be maintained.
6. Our difficulties cannot be solved in our own strength or in human wisdom. "It is necessary that we pray earnestly and consistently that God will give us wisdom to understand His will, and that He will grant us the courage and faith to follow the guidance of His Spirit."

In the preamble to the six points, which were developed with supporting arguments, the ministers stressed that they were acting as individuals, Georgians, and southerners "and represent no one but ourselves." They added.

"At the same time we believe that the sentiments which we express are shared by a multitude of our fellow citizens who are deeply troubled by our present situation, and who know that hatred, defiance, and violence are not the answer to our problem."

The ministers emphasized that the solution of racial problems imposed a special responsibility on the churches and "we are conscious that our own example in the matter of brotherhood and neighborliness has been all too imperfect."

"We are also conscious that racial injustice and violence are not confined to our section, and that racial problems have by no means been solved anywhere in our nation. Two wrongs, however, do not make a right. The failures of others are not a justification of our own shortcomings, nor can their unjust criticisms excuse us for a failure to do our duty in the sight of God. Our one concern must be to know and to do that which is right."

The ministers made it clear that their belief in full legal and social rights for Negroes and the maintenance of close and friendly contacts between leaders of the Negro and white races do not imply a belief in racial amalgamation. . . .

"The use of the word 'integration' in connection with our



schools and other areas of life has been unfortunate, since to many that term has become synonymous with amalgamation. We do not believe in the amalgamation of the races, nor do we feel that it is favored by right-thinking members of either race.

"We do believe that all Americans, whether black or white, have a right to the full privileges of first-class citizenship. To suggest that a recognition of the rights of Negroes to the full privileges of American citizenship and to such necessary contacts as might follow would inevitably result in intermarriage is to cast as serious and unjustified an aspersion on the white race as upon the Negro race." . . .

They did not condemn or endorse the United States Supreme Court's 1954 decision on integration in the schools, as presumably there are varying shades of opinion among them on this question. But they emphasized their conviction that any attempt that may be made to change that decision must be by legal means rather than by violence or economic reprisals.

In working out the South's problem, the ministers stressed the necessity for a larger measure of communication among "responsible leaders of the races."

(*Christian Science Monitor*, November 9)

### Bethesda Ministers Issue Statement

Protestant ministers in one of Washington's largest suburbs issued a joint statement condemning racial segregation as unChristian and pledging resistance to "any organization which incites race prejudice and undermines respect for law."

The statement was signed by 18 members of the Bethesda, Md., Council of Churches. The Rev. Lloyd G. Brown, president of the council, said it was prompted by the conviction that churches should make clear their position on racial relations before "violence, hatred and discord" gain a foothold in a community.

Mr. Brown said the ministers were not aware of any threat of racial trouble in Bethesda, where gradual integration of schools has been under way for two years without incident. But he observed that church leaders in Little Rock, Ark., had not thought, until it happened, that their community could be the scene of mob violence.

"We believe the principle of enforced racial segregation is a contradiction of our Christian faith," the ministers said. "We commit ourselves to uphold the enforcement of law and order in the community."

(*New York News*, November 17)

### Disciples of Christ Resolution

City churches faced with a changing racial pattern were urged . . . to resist the temptation to "sell out" and relocate in less critical neighborhoods.

The plea was made by 2,000 delegates attending the International Convention of Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ). They backed it up with a pledge of financial assistance to help such congregations "remain on the field and weather the transition period."

The convention also promised moral support to ministers and churches "willing to bear any cross of persecution or reprisal brought upon them by their fearless witness to the rights of all people, regardless of race or ethnic origin." . . .

The resolution noted that in many areas ministers and their congregations have been faced with persecution because of their stands on civil rights and their support of a nonsegregated church in a nonsegregated society.

Most metropolitan centers, it pointed out, have been turned "upside down and wrong side out" by population pressures.

The resolution viewed with dismay, however, what it described as a tendency, among many churches to follow the "social pattern of selling out and relocating rather than become an all-inclusive fellowship."

The resolution paid warm tribute to churches that confronted with this challenge, let it be known that their doors were open to "any and all people." . . .

(*New York Times*, October 16)

### A Dissenting Voice

Southern Methodists warned their national church body that the contemplated attempt to integrate Negro congregations into the same geographical districts with white congre-

gations would result in a division that would require "100 years to heal."

Fifty witnesses appeared at a public hearing conducted at Charlotte, N. C., by a fact-finding panel of The Methodist Church. The hearing, which received statements from Methodists of North and South Carolina and Virginia, was one of 24 being held across the country by a special commission to determine the future of the denomination's jurisdictional system.

There are six jurisdictions in the church, five of them geographical and the other, the Central Jurisdiction, an all-Negro grouping. A movement has been underway to abolish the Central Jurisdiction and to integrate the Negro congregations into their regular geographical jurisdiction along with white congregations.

Bishop Nolan B. Harmon of Charlotte, N. C., told the panel that the Central Jurisdiction was agreed upon in 1939, when three branches of Methodism united. He said that "without this constitutional guarantee the Southern Church would never have accepted this plan of union."

Hugo S. Sims, an Orangeburg, S. C., lawyer, said: "We are not going to integrate our schools or our churches. Very frankly it doesn't make any difference what the Supreme Court or The Methodist Church does. This attitude will not change."

Paul Ervin, Charlotte attorney, said the 1939 agreement was "a solemn pact made to be kept, not broken nor disregarded." He said enforced integration in the church would create a schism that would divide the denomination again.

The few who opposed the present jurisdictional system were mostly younger witnesses. They said that the system is discriminatory and lacked any justification. They claimed that the youth of the church is almost 100 per cent against segregation.

(*Lutheran Standard*, November 30)

### NAACP CHURCH PROGRAM

The NAACP has formulated a new four-point program designed to mobilize the support of organized religious groups. In the current civil rights struggle, it was announced here by the Reverend Edward J. Odom, Jr., NAACP church secretary.

Mr. Odom said the program has been designated "Churches for Freedom."

He indicated that the effort to enlist religious bodies has been undertaken because of the moral nature of the NAACP drive to eliminate segregation and bigotry in American life.

Mr. Odom described the "Churches for Freedom" program as follows:

1. Coordinated social action programs among church groups for the purpose of securing dedicated participation in the current NAACP registration and voting campaign.
2. Special religious education projects intended to establish lines of communication between Negro and white church groups to serve as a basis for mutual understanding and the improvement of community attitudes on racial questions.
3. Planned "Churches for Freedom" religious services on local state and regional levels to bring moral and spiritual dimensions into the question of full citizenship rights.
4. Increased participation of local church groups in the NAACP's life membership campaign, to give religious bodies an opportunity to join civic, labor and social organizations in making a material investment in the civil rights fight.

Generally, the new program will "seek to stimulate and channel social action and spiritual, educational and financial activity in cooperation with the NAACP, Mr. Odom explained.

He said the effort will be implemented through NAACP state and local church committees.

The Association "is encouraged by the increasing concern exhibited by organized religious groups in the current integration crisis, particularly in the South," Mr. Odom added. (*Kansas City Call* — November 29.)

### RACE PROBLEM — NORTHERN STYLE

Recent statistics indicate that there are many Northern cities which have by actual count, vastly more Negroes than great metropolitan centers in the South. The reason is perfectly plain, since Negroes, like other human beings, are apt to go where opportunity seems most promising. As a result, at the



present time we have in nearly every large industrial city in the North new peoples moving in from the South who are, by color, immediately identifiable. This eventuality is bringing with it new and pressing concerns.

There will be of course problems in employment since new workers in an area require new jobs. There will be problems too, in education since new families mean new children in school. There will be housing problems since new homes are a necessity. But hanging over all of these, and charging them with a dangerous current, is the greatest single problem of all — a new color is being added. A matter which we have always thought of in terms of the Southland has suddenly become our own anxiety; the fire from the far away hills is at last rolling its smoke into our own back yards. What of it?

The first reaction is to say that we have had Negroes in our cities for generations and they have never been any special concern for us; usually they lived in their own neighborhoods and, in expression, "minded their own business." This, however, is clearly changing, for the once Negro neighborhoods are no longer large enough for the new influx to be accommodated, and Negroes of a later generation are not satisfied with the "ghettos" which once were accepted by their fathers. More Negroes are present in our cities than ever before, and still more will come; besides, their presence will be more noticeable for they will be mingled with the whites in what were formerly totally white neighborhoods. What of this development?

Recent incidents in Illinois and Pennsylvania make us wonder if the lectures we used to give to our Southern friends now deserve rereading for home consumption. As long as the problem was far away we were anxious to be heard on it and to describe in highly moral terms the requirements of elementary Christianity. But police stand watch over a Negro home in Levittown and certain areas of Chicago are a tinderbox of tension — and there are unnumbered smaller situations which have large local significance. What are we going to do now when it is perfectly plain that next week, or next month, or next year, *our* brothers, *our* sisters, *our* cousins and *our* friends are about to be involved? Does anyone doubt for a moment that emotions here can be just as unruly as elsewhere and that violence here, as so often in other areas, can replace the calm voice of reason.

We may as well face the unpleasant fact that the only thing that can save us from the most frightening excesses is a vast and immediate labor of public education. Here the Church can do a work that can have a speedy and salutary effect. Even before the problem comes to us locally (wherever we are) we must be sure that the traditional Catholic teaching, so courageously proclaimed by our brethren in the South, is clearly understood by every soul that claims to be Christian. Human equality, the dignity of man, the rights of the human person, the universality of Redemption, the all-embracing mission of the Church — *all of these* are basically religious truths and anyone who does violence to them strikes at the heart of Christ. The truths of Faith can bring us to the solution of our problems — but these truths must be clearly understood, *and in concrete circumstances they must be fearlessly applied.* (*The Pilot*, official organ of the Archdiocese of Boston, Mass.)

## SCHOOLS OPEN TO ALL — It Can Be Done

### Washington, D. C.

Desegregation of Washington schools is "complete as of today," but integration is still to be accomplished, School Superintendent Hobart M. Corning said [recently].

"There is a vast amount of difference between desegregation and integration," he told members of the Washington Region, National Conference of Christians and Jews.

Desegregation is merely the moving about of people and things. We have accomplished that. Each school is open to every living child within its boundaries.

"Integration is a much longer process. Its success will depend on creation in the community of the social climate necessary for the progress of education." . . .

"Home living and community environment must be improved before true integration can be achieved," Corning said.

"Too many of our children — white and colored, but espe-

cially colored — live in overcrowded, substandard homes where the climate of learning does not exist."

This obstacle cannot be overcome by the schools alone, which only have charge of 11 per cent of the children's time, he stressed. . . .

Washington's public school enrollment is now 28.8 per cent white and 71.2 per cent Negro, Corning announced. Last year 32 per cent of the students were white and 68 per cent Negro.

Based on an Oct. 18 "peak enrollment" head count of 111,114, there are now 32,001 white students and 79,113 Negroes. Last year the schools enrolled 35,000 white students and 74,000 Negroes.

Corning said the shift in racial composition was due not only to a rush to the suburbs, which has been experienced by other large cities, but also to "a tremendous migration in of colored population, much of it from the South."

Denying flatly that there has been any lowering of academic standards, Corning pointed to "the high achievements of a vast majority of our boys and girls."

But he conceded that "too many" are not living up to the standards set. He said the academic lag of many students was due to their social and economic backgrounds, previously inadequate education and "the fact that many come from the Deep South."

"The disparity is not attributable to inherent differences between the races," he declared.

Though most teachers, and school officials are "doing a magnificent job," Corning said a number of school employees are inefficient. He called for changes in regulations which would make it easier to "dispense with those who are incompetent."

"Continuing support of the general public and an insistence that school needs be met" will be required to make the Washington school system "a model for the Nation," Corning said.

(*Washington Post and Times Herald*, Oct. 31)

### Pleasanton, Texas

Pleasanton High School integrated nine Negro students . . . amid peacefulness and well wishing. Not a sound or gesture of protest was noted as the historic integration went off like a well timed parade.

The students were met on the steps of the new \$550,000 school by Supt. J. D. Klingeman, Principal D. C. Baldree and Janice Slomchinski, president of the student council.

"We're happy to have you here this morning," Baldree told the new students in a friendly voice.

Each of the nine youngsters was given a chance to respond to the welcome and then was led to classes by a member of the Student Council. . . .

There was a slight nervousness noted in both Negro and white students because of the attention given the integration.

A score of members of the nation's press, radio, television and newsreel companies were on hand to record what Baldree termed the "Christian-like" integration.

Several ministers, civic leaders and many of the pupils milled outside the school before classes started. There seemed to be no opponent to integration present.

Valmo C. Bellinger, publisher of the San Antonio Register, a Negro weekly, told Klingsman and Baldree it was one of the "greatest demonstrations of Americanism I have ever seen."

Pleasanton residents had voted 342 to 88 to integrate their school.

The election was the first held in Texas under a new law passed by the last State Legislature which requires approval of a majority of voters in a special election before a school can integrate.

The law, which was urged by pro-segregationists in an effort to slow down integration, has not yet been tested in courts. However, the Dallas School Board, under Federal Court [order] to integrate, has asked for a Federal Court ruling on the constitutionality of the state law.

There are a total of 37 Negro students in the Pleasanton School districts, which has 750 white students. The Texas Almanac shows the population is 49.9 per cent Latin-American, 48.9 per cent Anglo-American and 1.2 per cent Negro. . . . (*Pittsburgh Courier*, November 9, 1957)



## AN ASPECT OF MASSIVE RESISTANCE —

### Denial of Opportunity

A white woman who declined to sign application forms under the Virginia pupil placement act . . . lost her bid before the State Supreme Court for an order readmitting her two sons to Fairfax County public schools.

Mrs. Theo Defebio refused to sign the forms necessary for all new and transfer pupils by saying her act would have the effect of endorsing the state's anti-integration school policies. As a result, her two sons, Theodore 14, and Dominick, 9 were dropped from school.

She subsequently turned down the state's offer to sign the forms under protest.

In denying Mrs. Defebio a writ of Mandamus the court did not pass upon the constitutionality of the statute on the apparent grounds that no racial issue was involved.

The act was one of a package of pro-segregation school bills adopted by the General Assembly.

The act has been nullified as a barrier to racial desegregation in the schools in an opinion by the U. S. 4th Circuit Court of Appeals. The U. S. Supreme Court declined to review the circuit court findings.

(*Atlanta Constitution* — December 3, 1957)

### NEW YORK CITY HOUSING BILL

The highly controversial City Administration bill banning discrimination in private rental housing was passed by the City Council [Dec. 5].

Councilmen favoring the measure hailed it as "historic" and predicted that its effect would be felt around the world.

The measure forbids discrimination, on the basis of race, creed or national origin, in private multiple dwellings housing three or more families.

The bill, which ultimately must be signed by Mayor Wagner for enactment, would take effect April 1, 1958.

Approval of the bill was not unanimous. Twenty Councilmen voted for it. Councilman Maurice J. McCarthy, Jr., Bronx Democrat, voted against it. He called the bill "cumbersome," questioned its constitutionality and doubted that it could be effectively enforced. . . .

The Council's action brought an announcement last night from James Andrew's spokesman for the Real Estate Board of New York and bitter foe of the legislation, that the bill, if enacted into law, "will be tested in the highest courts because we believe that it violates the fundamental rights of the owner of private property."

As against this view, scores of civic, labor and religious organizations poured out their praise for the bill.

The measure exempts one and two-family homes, unless they are in developments of ten units or more. Bias in public housing already is banned by law. . . .

Under the machinery set up in the legislation, the city's Commission on Intergroup Relations will weigh complaints.

If mediation and conciliation fail, complaints will go for review to a three man Fair Housing Practices Board selected from a Fair Housing Practices Panel appointed by the Mayor. The Mayor will designate the three-man board in each case.

The board of three will serve without pay but will be reimbursed for expenses. It will pass on the merit of a grievance.

The provision for conciliation and review machinery was written into the bill last Tuesday by the General Welfare Committee after weeks of haggling.

The committee also removed from the bill, as originally introduced, penalty clauses that provided for bringing alleged violators into court where fines up to \$500 could be imposed upon conviction for a misdemeanor.

Among those who witnessed the Council's action yesterday was Algernon D. Black, chairman of the State Committee on Discrimination in Housing.

"We are delighted that a bill has been passed, which is a firm commitment to the principle of non-discrimination in private housing," Mr. Black said.

James H. Scheuer hailed the anti-bias bill . . . as "a good example for New York City as a center for intergroup living." He is chairman of the Housing Advisory Council to the New York State Commission Against Discrimination.

For the American Jewish Congress, Shad Polier, vice president, praised the City Council's action.

Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said that implementation of the new law over the years should assist in the integration of New York City's public schools.

In declaring his opposition, Mr. McCarthy emphasized that he opposed housing segregation, but he believed the Sharkey-Brown-Isaacs measure would "never open one piece of property to any individual or any minority group."

(*New York Times*, December 6)

### INTERESTING READING

**AGENDA FOR ACTION** by James P. Warburg. Mondel Publishers, Inc., New York, N. Y. \$1.25.

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